

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus

Half Year Report

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 2-3 pages** in length.

If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2024

Please note all projects that were active before 1 October 2024 are required to complete a Half Year Report.

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line.

Project reference	<i>This should be the project reference provided in your offer paperwork and not your application number</i>
Project title	Improving capacity for plant biodiversity planning in Guinea
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Guinea
Lead Organisation	Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
Partner(s)	Herbier National de Guinée, MBG, Guinée Ecologie, CFZ, CRRRA-Sérédou
Project leader	<i>Charlotte Couch</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR1</i>
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.herbierguinee.org/darwin-cc.html

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end of September).

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

This first five months of the project have been mainly focused on training and producing materials for the new course in Tropical Plant Family Identification. We launched a call for applicants in August 2024 for applicants for the two courses that will be taught in October, one in Conakry, one in Sérédou. Each course has a maximum of 20 places, 40 places in total. We had 140 applicants in total, unfortunately not as many female applicants as we would have liked. All candidates had to specify which course they wanted to attend, the split was quite even for the two localities. We triaged the applicants and chose them mainly on their answers to two specific questions: What is your motivation for doing the course and how do plan to use the knowledge you learn in the future.

The project coordinator obtained the English course materials from Kew and with assistance from Ehoarn Bidault from MBG, and Ana Rita Simoes (Kew) translated the lectures into French

and prepared a course manual. The first course will take place 7-12 Oct in Conakry and the second at Sérédou 21-26 Oct.

In May (27 May to 1 June) we taught a vegetation survey techniques course with CFZ and local NGO staff in Nzérékoré with co-funding from a philanthropic grant we have for community collaboration for conservation of TIPAs in Guinee Forestiere. Eighteen people were trained in Vegetation Survey Techniques.

Additionally, at the start of October, we validated our safeguarding plan with the communities in Guinee Forestiere.

Preparation of materials for the seed collection training and putting in place the seed collection networks in Guinee Forestiere started in September. This is due to commence in Oct with ten communities supported by CFZ, HNG, Kew and Guinee Ecologie.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

The project started one month late, but this will not impact the project. This change was agreed with NIRAS.

We had to postpone a training course in June. Our collaborator, ENATEF's training centre being renovated and used as an exam centre for Mamou. Due to the delay at the start of the school year from the explosion of fuel tanks at the port in Dec 2023, causing a lack of fuel and electricity, the exams were delayed by 3 weeks. We plan to reschedule this in December after the Plant ID courses and seed collection training activities have been completed.

Translation of the course materials took longer than expected. In the original planning the first course was due to being in June. This was an ambitious target and not attainable given the volume of material to translate. Both courses were rescheduled to October 2024.

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with NIRAS:

Yes

Formal Change Request submitted:

Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

Yes

Change Request reference if known: *If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome*

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)

Actual spend:

4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2025)?

Yes No

4c. If you expect and underspend, then you should consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no

guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes to your project if necessary. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

Not at this time.

6. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent annual report. If your project was subject to an Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment please use this space to comment on any changes to international human rights risks, and to address any additional mitigations outlined in your offer letters. Please provide the comment and then your response. If you have already provided a response, please confirm when.

Following comments on our logframe MoVs.

Output 2, Indicator 2.2. We will introduce some peer-review questionnaires to assess the efficacy of the seed collection networks. Each group will be asked to assess the contributions of the others every 4 months once all the training has been completed.

Output 2, Indicator 2.3. What is meant by 'initial business plan' in the MoV? Is the project able to facilitate this aspect through to the finalisation of business plans within the project timeframe? We intend for each group to have at least a draft 5-year plan outlined by the end of the project, but we are not 100% sure if a final version can be delivered within the project timeframe.

Output 2, Indicator 2.3- A training report will be submitted by the trainer in business planning. Pre and post assessments of participants will also be done.

Checklist for submission

For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1st April 2024)	
Have you responded to any additional feedback (other than caveats) received in the letter you received to say your application was successful which requested response at HYR (including safeguarding points)? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	X
If not already submitted, have you attached your risk register ?	
For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1st April 2024)	
Have you responded to feedback from your latest Annual Report Review ? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	X
Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	X
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	X